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A DREAM STORY FOR LITTLE CHILDREN

BY

ANNIE COLLINS

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS BY E. CAPPER

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SOMETHING NEW

CHAPTER I

IT had been raining incessantly the whole day, and, towards evening the children, having exhausted all their sources of amusement, came to "Auntie" clamouring for a story, and, like the Athenians of old, they wanted to hear "something new."

"We don't care what it is about, Auntie, only it must be something new," said Bessie.

"Yes, it must be *something new*," said Bertie, "about lions, and tigers, and mad dogs, and people being lost in the woods and eaten up by Indians."

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"I can't bear such dreadful stories!" said Frank, "they always make me shudder, and I dream about them. Can't you tell us something new about Heaven and the angels, Auntie?"

"Of course she cannot," said Bertie, "she has never been there; and you know that they are always singing in Heaven. If we are good we shall go to Heaven and stand around God's throne, and sing 'Glory, Glory, Glory!' for ever, and ever, and *ever!* Nurse told me so; and *I* don't want to go there!"

"Oh! Bertie, you naughty boy!"

"Well, I'm not a-going to go; so that's settled. I kept singing 'Glory, Glory, Glory,' one night when I was in bed, to see how I should like it, and, oh, I did get tired!"

Auntie's eyes glanced kindly from one to the other, and after resting thoughtfully for a moment upon Bessie's tumbled hair and inky fingers, she said—

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"Suppose I tell you of a wonderful dream about Heaven which a little girl once dreamed."

"Yes, that will do, Auntie, what was the little girl's name? what was she like? and had she any brothers and sisters?"

"Her name was Myra. In appearance she was very much like Bessie, with blue eyes and flaxen hair. She had one sister and two brothers; Myra was nine years old, Katie was seven, Alfred was six, and little Percy three."

"Now, I believe this story is going to be a make-up one about us," said Bertie, "for Bessie is nine, Frank is seven, I am six, and Charlie is three."

"*I* never had a wonderful dream about Heaven, you silly boy!"

"And I am not a girl," said Frank, laughing, "my name is not Katie."

"Well, then, it ought to be, because you always want to stay indoors with mother."

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"Thank you for the *con*formation, Bertie," said Frank, with a dignified air.

Auntie began:—"You will understand the dream better if I tell you first a little about Myra herself. She had a happy home, a kind father and mother, and in some ways she was a very nice child—bright, clever, and truthful. But, on the other hand, she had faults which quite spoilt her; she was idle, untidy, and thoughtless. She would never take the trouble to do anything that she did not feel inclined to. She never put anything away in its proper place, and, when she was asked to go on a message, or do something for anyone, she had a bad habit of saying, 'I will go presently,' or 'I will do it to-morrow.' The day before she had the dream everything went wrong with her. She would not get up when she was called, so she was late for breakfast, late in the schoolroom, and her lessons were very imperfectly done. She made little Percy cry by speaking unkindly to him, and when Alfred wanted

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her to sew a sail on to his boat she wouldn't do it, but told him he 'must wait till to-morrow.'

"Katie, on the other hand, was unselfish and thoughtful, and always tried to make others happy. I will shew you one instance of how differently the little girls acted.

"In the afternoon of this same day, lessons being over, Miss Simpson took them for a walk into the country, and, as they were returning home laden with flowers, they passed a cottage where a little cripple was sitting, watching them wistfully as they ran so merrily down the road.

"Katie said compassionately: 'Look at that poor little girl! Let us go and speak to her, and give her our flowers!'

"But Myra answered impatiently: 'Really, Katie, you seem to think that I never want to please myself! I have arranged these flowers so prettily on purpose for mother, and I am not going to give them to that dirty little girl!'

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"So Katie ran across the road alone, and, saying something kind, she gave the little cripple all the flowers she had gathered, and kissed her.

"When Myra saw the child's pale face flush with pleasure she felt ashamed of herself, and half turned back; then she thought: 'Never mind, I will give her something better to-morrow.'

"But when this mis-spent day came to an end, and the children were all in bed, their mother went as usual to kiss them and wish them good-night. She sat down by Myra's bedside, and asked sadly: 'When is my careless little girl going to turn over a new leaf?'

"The naughty spirit which had been with Myra all day had not yet left her. At her mother's question she began to cry, and said: 'Everyone is unkind to me. I think I am quite as good as Katie. I know she told a lie once, and I never have. I would die rather than tell a lie.'

"'For all that,' said her mother, 'you are a very

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"SHE GAVE THE LITTLE CRIPPLE ALL THE FLOWERS SHE HAD GATHERED."

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disappointing little daughter to me. You possess many good qualities, and you might be a noble child if only you were more earnest, dear. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, *do it with thy might.* You should take that text for your motto.'

"After her mother had left the room, Myra felt sorry because she had grieved her so, and she resolved that she would turn over a new leaf the next day. Then she thought, 'I wonder why we talk of turning over a new leaf? one would suppose we all have books.' Whilst she was thinking of this she fell asleep, and this is what she dreamed.

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CHAPTER II

"SHE dreamed that the room was full of a beautiful soft light, and that she looked to see where it came from, when she saw two lovely angels. One was standing at the foot of her little bed, and the other at the foot of Katie's. She looked at them for some time in wonder; she had never seen such beautiful beings before. Each of them wore a golden crown upon his head, and they were clothed in long white robes as white as snow. At length, when Myra found that they still kept watch, and did not seem to be going away, she said to the angel who stood at the foot of her bed: 'Why do you stand there watching for so long?' Then the angel answered in a voice like the sweetest music, 'Because

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I am your guardian angel. When you were born into the world, God, the King of Heaven and earth, sent me to take care of you because you are His child.' Myra said, 'But I have never seen you before; are you really with me always, every night and every day?' The angel answered, 'I am.' Myra asked again: 'What does the other beautiful angel do?' The angel replied, 'He keeps guard over Katie.' So Myra looked at Katie's guardian angel more intently, and she noticed that his crown glittered with jewels, and that his face was full of joy as he leaned over Katie's bed and looked upon her with eyes of love.

"Now Myra felt happy to know that these angels were in the room, and she thought, 'I shall never feel frightened again now I know that I have a loving angel from Heaven to take care of me.' But when she looked at her own angel again she noticed that his face was not full of joy like the other's, and that he had no jewels in his crown. She was

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wondering why this was, when the door opened, and *another* angel entered the room. He was a very mighty angel. His face was so glorious that Myra was obliged to shade her eyes before she could look at him. He had long wings, and his robe was made of fine threads of gold. He went up to the two guardian angels and kissed them, and gave them a message from God, for he had just come from Heaven. Then he went to the table and put down a bundle of books, two bottles, and a very large pen. Myra saw that one of the bottles was full of the blackest ink, but the other was filled with liquid gold. She wondered what he was going to do, and, whilst he was looking over the books, she said to her guardian angel, 'Who is this mighty angel? He is so glorious that I cannot look at him.' The angel replied, 'You can speak to him yourself.'

"So Myra said, 'Will you tell me what your name is, and what you are going to do with all those books?'

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"Then he looked at her, and answered, 'I am the recording angel; in each of these books I keep the record of the life of every one in this house. These four small books are for you children; the two large ones for your father and mother; and the other three belong to nurse and cook and Mary. Every night when you are in bed I come and write down all the things you have done during the day, and each leaf of the book is used for one day.'

"Then Myra said quickly, 'Please write down in my book that I have never told a lie in my life, and that I am going to be a very good girl to-morrow.'

"The recording angel took no notice of what she said, as if he had not heard; but he lifted a beautiful little book from the table, and Myra saw that it was made of tablets of silver; he then dipped the pen in the liquid gold, and stood beside Katie's angel, and asked him to give an account of all that she had done and said that day; and, as he wrote, his face grew more glorious to look upon, and beamed with

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joy as he said, 'How the King will rejoice when He sees this beautiful writing!'

"Myra asked, 'Will you let me see what you have written in Katie's book, as it makes you look so glad?'

"So the recording angel turned the opened book towards her, and she saw written in letters of gold that Katie had done everything that day to please the Lord Jesus Christ. It was written down that

"'Katie learnt her lessons with all her might.
Katie left her own play to sew Alfred's sail on his boat.
Katie gave her flowers to, and comforted, a poor cripple.
Katie ran willingly wherever she was sent.
Katie always tried to make others happy.'

And the page was filled up so from the top to the bottom.

"Myra said, 'How very beautiful it looks! How pleased dear little Katie would be if she could see it. Will you now write down the same in mine?'

"Then she saw her guardian weep, and the record-

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"SO THE RECORDING ANGEL TURNED THE OPENED BOOK TOWARDS HER."

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ing angel look stern, as he took up an ugly little book in a black cover, and dipped his pen in the black ink and began to write. As he wrote his face grew sadder and sadder, and at last he exclaimed, 'How the King will grieve when He sees this black writing!'

"So Myra asked, 'Why do you look so sad? and why cannot I have a pretty book made of tablets of silver? and I do not like that ugly black ink. Will you show me what you have written in my book?'

"The recording angel turned it towards her, and *how* frightened she felt! There she saw written down in large black writing that she had done nothing all the day to please the Lord Jesus Christ. It was written from the top to the bottom like this:—

"'Myra disobeyed her mother this morning.
Myra forgot to say her prayers.
Myra made little Percy unhappy by speaking unkindly to him.

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Myra would not help her brother Alfred.
Myra did not try to learn her lessons.
Myra despised one of Jesus's little sisters.'

And so the page was filled up.

"When she had read it she began to weep, saying, 'Oh, please rub it out! I never thought everything would be written down like that, and I am sure that Jesus will be displeased with me.'

"But the recording angel showed her that the more he rubbed the letters the blacker they looked. Then she said anxiously, 'Give me the book and I will pour some water over it.' But she found that the letters were cut deep into the book, and the more she washed it with water the blacker and deeper they became. Then she clung to the neck of her guardian angel and asked, 'Is there nothing that will rub out this writing that frightens me so much?' The angel whispered, 'Nothing but the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.'

"Then Myra knelt down, and asked Jesus to blot

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out the writing with His blood ; and before she had finished her prayer, the recording angel held up the book ; and behold ! not a letter of the dreadful writing was to be seen. Also, the black cover was gone, and the book was as white as snow !

" How grateful Myra felt. She turned over the white leaves, and found nothing but blank pages. 'It is wonderful!' she exclaimed, 'the book is quite spotless ! but now, if you please, will you fill up all those empty leaves with letters of gold ?'

" The recording angel shook his head and said, 'It is quite impossible for me to do that. Each of these leaves is a day of your life that has passed, so they must always remain blank as you see them now. But to-morrow you will turn over a new leaf, and, when I come again, if I find that you have done things pleasing to God, I shall write them down in letters of gold, and put a jewel in your guardian angel's crown.' Then he took up the books and went away.

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"The recording angel had hardly left the room when another angel entered. Myra exclaimed, 'I could not have believed that we live in a house where there are so many angels coming to and fro! How is it that we do not always see them?'

"Her guardian angel answered, 'Because your eyes are not strong enough to look upon Heavenly things.'

"Now this was a youthful-looking angel, with large dark eyes, black curling hair, and a joyful expression of countenance. Myra loved him when she looked at him; and she noticed that on his arm he carried two small white robes. Presently he came towards her with his smiling face, and she asked, 'Are you a guardian angel or a recording angel?'

"He replied, 'I am neither a guardian angel nor a recording angel; but I am one of the Heavenly messengers, and my name is Death. The King has sent me with a message to you

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and Katie. He said, "Tell my little sisters I must see them to-night." And you are to wear these white robes that you may appear before Him in perfect beauty.'

"Myra said, 'I thought the angel of death was very terrible, and that he carried a large sword with which he cut down every one he came near!' He answered, 'I look terrible to wicked men, but I always come to little children with a smiling face, and salute them with a peaceful kiss!' Then he kissed them peacefully and went away.

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CHAPTER III

"THEN the guardian angels clothed the two children in the white robes; and all the while they talked to them with their sweet voices, which were like music. Then they each took one by the hand and went down the stairs. They opened the drawing-room door as they passed it, and there were father and mother standing by the fireside talking; but they did not know that their little girls were there with the angels, because their eyes were not strong enough to look upon Heavenly things. Afterwards they opened the street door and passed out; and then the angels lifted the little girls up in their arms, unfolded their beautiful wings, and carried them up and up far away among the

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"THEN THEY EACH TOOK ONE BY THE HAND AND WENT DOWN THE STAIRS."

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stars. Myra looked down and watched the world which they had left, and she saw it grow gradually smaller and smaller, until it became a distant star, such as she had often watched in the sky, and at last she saw it no more. Then she looked around her, and, oh! what wonderful sights she saw. She found that they were flying among a great number of worlds, and the angel told her that there were all the little stars which she used to see at night when she was upon the earth. They went so close to some of them that Myra fancied she could see some people moving about, although she was not near enough to be quite sure. She asked so many questions about the stars and the people who lived upon them that at last the angel passed his hand over her eyes and sent her to sleep, because he was not permitted to answer her questions until she was in Heaven.

"When she awoke she found that they were resting in a bower covered with wonderful flowers, quite

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different from any that she had seen upon the earth. She felt very happy, and not at all tired, although they had come such a long way. The angel told her she might go where she pleased. So she took Katie's hand and went out. She found that they were passing through some lovely country. Everything you can imagine to make one happy was there! Everything was pleasant to look upon. There was no dust, and nothing was withered. The birds were singing softly in the trees, and doves were cooing and fluttering about among the flowers, for there was nothing to hurt them or make them afraid. The two children—looking beautiful in their white robes—went on together, until they came to a clear river which ran through the country, and walking by the side of it they saw a great number of people clothed in white. They all looked full of peace and love; no one was tired, and no one was ill. There were also many children there. But Myra was very thoughtful. She thought the country must be Heaven;

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and yet not a single person there had a crown upon his head. At length she asked her guardian angel what was the name of the country through which they were travelling, when he replied, 'This is Heaven, no one can enter here unless his sins are washed away with the blood of the Lord Jesus, and here the weary are at rest.' Myra asked again, 'How is it that they wear no crowns upon their heads? Every person here seems to be loving and peaceful, but not *joyful*. I am sure if I were always to live in this happy country I should be full of joy.'

"A boy who was passing heard Myra say this to the angel, so he answered and said, 'Dear little girl, the reason why we are not full of joy is because we cannot enter into the Holy City, where the King of Glory dwells.'

"Myra asked, 'Who is the King of Glory? and why cannot you enter into the Holy City where He dwells?'

"'The King of Glory is the Lord Jesus Christ,' he

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replied, 'and all they who dwell with Him in the Holy City are crowned, and will become Kings and Priests unto God the Father. But we cannot enter there, because when we lived upon the earth we did not strive for the prize—the glorious crown; and although the King was very grieved about it, He could not permit us to stay; and so,' he added wistfully, 'we cannot be joyful when we are always longing to see His face, and we remember it is through our own fault that we cannot follow Him wheresoever He goeth!'

"Then gentle little Katie said anxiously, 'I hope I have won the prize, for I want Jesus to take me up in His arms and kiss me, and bless me, and let me always be quite close to Him.'

"Then Katie's guardian angel, who had the joyful face and bright jewels in his crown, took her up again in his arms, and said, 'Let us go into the Holy City, and we shall find the King walking in the garden among the lilies.'

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CHAPTER IV

"SO they went on again until they came to a great city enclosed within a high wall. They had seen it glittering a long way off, for the wall was built with precious stones. Upon each of the four sides there were three gates, which were always kept wide open. Each gate was made of a single pearl, and was guarded by an angel with a drawn sword, that nothing wicked or unclean should enter, but only those who were dressed in the robes which the King of Glory had sent to them. When they came up to one of the gates Myra saw written over the portal, in large flaming letters, these words:

"'THE HOLY CITY OF THE KING OF GLORY,
HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.'

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"The guardian angels told the angel who stood by the gate that the King had sent for these two children; so he bade them welcome, and let them enter into the City. How is it possible for me to describe the marvellous things that they saw there? The City had no need of the sun, because it was lighted with the glory of the King. Angels were flying to and fro, and, as they passed one another, they sang praises, saying, 'Holy is the King, the Lord of Hosts, every place is full of His Glory!' On either side of the golden streets were the mansions that Jesus had prepared for those who love Him. Moving about inside them Myra saw people who had once lived upon this earth, but now they were glorious like the angels. They came to one mansion which was not yet occupied, and Myra's angel told her that it had been prepared for her father and mother, who were coming presently. How she laughed for joy, as she exclaimed, 'Then we shall never be separated

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again, but live in this Holy City for ever and ever.'

"Presently they came to a garden. Here they saw the 'eternal bowers' which we sing about in our hymns, and the never-fading flowers, such as they had seen in the other part of Heaven. They were met by a company of children with crowns of gold upon their heads. Some of them were clothed in pure white, some had silvery robes, and some looked golden. Myra noticed, too, that their crowns were different; although they were all glorious, some of them were more so than others. Several of the children looked lovely in crowns with stars around them; and the angel told her that was because when they were upon the earth they had tried to teach others to love Jesus. But those she admired most of all had inlaid across the forehead with precious stones the word 'Truthful,' and the children who wore that kind of crown were the most noble and beautiful-looking of them all. She

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enquired of her angel why they wore crowns which were so much brighter than the others, and why they were marked 'Truthful'? The angel replied that these children were much loved by the King, because all the time they lived upon the earth they had never told a lie. Myra thought, 'Then I shall have one of these crowns, because *I* have never told a lie.'

"As they entered this garden the children welcomed them with songs of joy, and told them how happy they would be in this blessed place. And how they praised the King! They talked of His love and of all He had done for them, as they led the way to the garden of lilies—for there they had to await His coming. Then Myra sat down and watched the children; some were playing and some were singing 'Glory' because they were so happy that they were obliged to sing. But she was much surprised to find that some were learning lessons. The angel smiled at her astonishment and said,

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'Children have much to learn before they are fit to do the great works to which they are called, so the King sets them an appointed task; and, seeing that they love Him above all things, it is their joy to do His will, whatever it may be. One of his greatest rewards is to let them become His messengers, and He has given to each one a new name!'

"Myra said, 'I wonder what new name He will give to me; I hope He will make me one of His Messengers!' but the angel replied, 'That reward is only for those who ran willingly to do His bidding upon the earth!'

"Then Myra began to talk about something else, and she said, 'As I have been watching all these children, I have noticed that although they are as different in features and complexions as the children upon earth, yet, in some way, they are all alike. How is that?' The angel replied, 'That likeness to each other is the beauty of Holiness, which is reflected from the face of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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When you have looked upon Him you will be like Him too!'

"Just then a bright angel, whose crown was full of jewels, walked towards them, carrying a little girl very tenderly in his arms, and Myra saw that it was the little cripple to whom Katie had given her flowers. She, too, had been summoned by the angel of death to meet the King in the garden of lilies.

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CHAPTER V

"SUDDENLY Myra saw those holy children leave their books and their play and run quickly in one direction. She looked after them in astonishment, for she could not see why they should all go away so. Then she listened intently, and she heard in the distance the sound of children's voices singing, and they sang a new song which she could not understand. She turned her eyes in the direction from whence the sound came, and she saw that the place was lighted up with some great glory, but she could not tell what the wonderful sight might be. She was about to ask her guardian angel, when he said in a glad voice, 'Behold the King cometh!' Myra heard the sound of the music coming nearer

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and nearer, until at last the radiant throng entered the garden of lilies! Then she saw the King of Glory, the dear Lord Jesus Christ. I dare not attempt to tell you of His beauty! No one can imagine how great it is! and there is nothing I can compare Him to, because he is the Son of God; but He is altogether lovely! He was walking in the midst of a multitude of children; and it was they who were making such Heavenly music. Some of them had golden harps, some trumpets of silver. Others, again, were playing upon cymbals and drums. Some of the children were riding upon horses; but these were only for the messengers, because they had to do the King's messages very swiftly.

"When the King came near He went to the little cripple, who was still lying in the arms of her guardian angel, and, bending over her, he said, 'Jesus Christ maketh thee whole.' Then she stood upon her feet, and the children watched her with joy, as

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she ran about eagerly among the flowers. When she had gathered some she brought them to Katie, saying, 'You gave me your flowers to-day, and so the first that I am able to gather I give to you in return.'

"Then the King welcomed Myra. He told her how much He loved her, and asked what she would most like Him to do for her; and when she saw what a wonderful face He had, she felt that she would not be happy unless she could always be near Him. So she said, 'Let me be one of Thy messengers, and give me a new name.'

"Afterwards the King took little Katie up in His arms and kissed her, and blessed her. And she said to Him very earnestly, 'I hope I have gained the crown, for I want to be always near Thee, and follow Thee about, wherever Thou goest.'

"Then the King called two of the children. He sent one of them to tell the recording angel to bring the books, and the other to tell an angel who took

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charge of the jewels to bring the crowns which were laid up in the treasury for these three little girls. So the messengers went upon their horses very swiftly, and soon an angel who was called the treasurer brought three crowns. One of them was the beautiful crown of truthfulness, and Myra felt sure that was for her, and she thought, 'I know I shall look lovely in that crown!' Then the same recording angel that she had seen writing by her bedside came, and he gave three little books into the King's hand.

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CHAPTER VI

"SO the King sat upon His throne; and, as He looked upon all the children, His glorious face beamed with loving-kindness towards them. The first book which He opened belonged to the little cripple. It was a very tiny one, for there was not much to write down in it, but Myra noticed that it was a very precious one. When the King had read it He drew the little girl close to Him, and called her His dear little lamb. Then He showed the book to the children, and they all saw, written down in letters of gold, the same writing day after day, that she had borne her sufferings patiently for Jesus' sake. Then the King asked, 'What shall we do for this little girl who had no happiness upon the

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earth?' The children answered, 'She shall be our dear little sister, and we will love her very much, and take her to see the most beautiful places in Heaven.' So the King put the crown upon her head, and Myra saw that it was something like the one which He Himself wore, because He had been a patient sufferer upon the earth; and when He had given her a new name, all the children rejoiced and sang the new song, because they were so pleased.

"Next Katie's book was opened. Myra saw how the King rejoiced when He read the beautiful writing! He turned the open book to the children, that they might see it; and He said to them, 'This little girl had everything to make her happy upon the earth, so she always tried to shew her love to Me by making others happy too. She did everything as well as she could; ran willingly wherever she was sent; she did everything to please Me; what shall we do for her?' They all answered again, 'Let her be one of Thy messengers, and follow

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Thee about, wheresoever Thou goest.' Then the King put the Heavenly crown upon her head, made her sit down close to Him, told her that she was one of His messengers, and whispered in her ear the new name, and Katie was quite satisfied.

"Lastly, the King took up Myra's book. He looked into her truthful face with a pleased smile, for He thought He would find some beautiful things written down about her. *But*, when He had opened the book, and turned over all the leaves from the beginning, He found that it was *quite empty!* Not a letter of any kind was to be seen! Then He looked at her guardian angel, and saw that he had no jewels in his crown.

"I hope you children will never see the look of sorrow that came into Jesus' face as He turned towards the little girl He loved and told her she had not won the prize! At that sight all the holy angels covered their faces with their wings; they could not bear to see it. And the children took off their crowns

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and laid them at His feet; they did not care for anything when Jesus was grieved. And how ashamed Myra felt, for the King showed the book to the children, and asked, 'What is to be done for this little girl who is not worthy of the crown?' But the children looked sad, and turned away their heads without saying a word. Then the King looked at Myra, and said, 'A noble, truthful little girl, and yet you have done nothing for Me. How is this?' Then she felt obliged to answer, 'It is because I was too idle to take the trouble to do anything that I did not feel inclined to.'

"Poor little Myra! A little while before her eyes sparkled with joy, but now they were full of tears. She saw the King give back the crown which she had thought would become her so well, and she heard Him tell the treasurer to put it away again. Afterwards He said to her, 'No one can live in this Holy City uncrowned, so you must go away into the other part of Heaven that you passed through before you

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entered here. I want you to be very happy, and you will find everything that is beautiful there. The trees will always be laden with pleasant fruits; you can drink of the water of life; nothing can ever hurt you or make you afraid; and there are many dear children to be companions for you.'

"But Myra answered, 'I know I shall not be happy. Oh! let me go back again to the earth; I don't mind if I am a poor little crippled girl, only let me go back and strive for the prize!'

"The King replied, 'If I let you go back, all the other children who have not won the crown will want to go back too; so, you see, that cannot be.'

"Myra said again, 'Then I must leave this joyful place, and when my father and mother come presently with the boys to live in their mansion, and they find I am not here, they will be so sorry! And my dear little sister Katie will not be happy without me, for we have never been separated before; but, what is worse than all, I cannot be one of Thy mes-

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sengers. I shall not see Thy beautiful face, nor be called by a new name, and some one else will wear the crown which Thou hadst kept on purpose for me.'

"Then her guardian angel led her away, and he talked to her with his voice, which was like the sweetest music, but she could not be comforted. She turned to take another look at the face of the King, and she saw Katie and the little cripple talking with those dear children, and their faces shone with the beauty of holiness which was reflected from the face of the Lord Jesus! Beyond them, among the everlasting hills, she saw the Temple of God. The place was all brightness and joy; for, although the children had felt sad because Myra was not to live with them, and some of them had cried about it, yet the Lord had wiped away all tears from their eyes, and they were quite happy again."

. . . . . .

Here Auntie stopped in her story, for brave Bertie was sobbing.

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"What is the matter, dear?"

"I don't like poor little Myra to be disappointed like that when she thought she was going to look so pretty in her 'Truthful' crown; and I don't like the King of Glory to be so sorry about it. I wish he would let her go back to the earth and try again. I am sure she wouldn't be naughty any more."

Bessie asked in a low voice, "Would the King *never* let her live in the Holy City, Auntie?"

"I am quite sure He wouldn't send her away and *never* let her go back again," said Frank, confidently, because He can do everything. You haven't finished, have you, Auntie? When the King saw how unhappy she was didn't He call her back and comfort her?"

"The story is not quite finished," replied Auntie, "Myra did dream that the King called her back and comforted her; but perhaps I had better stop now, you will be tired."

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"Oh! no we shall not; go on, please, Auntie, but we had quite forgotten that it is only a dream."

. . . . . .

"Then Myra dreamed that the King called her back, and said, 'Although I am sending you away from my presence and out of the Holy City, yet I will give you another trial. Where you are going you will find something to do for Me, and after an age I will send for you again, for my mercy endureth for ever!'

"If you could have heard the shouts of joy and praise that sounded through the Holy City you would have been astonished! The children crowded around Myra to wish her good-bye, and they told her that they should watch for her until she came again, and then they would take her to see Joseph, Samuel, David, and all the other good people that we read about in the Bible.

"So they went again through the streets of the city, and they all sang together, 'Our King is

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gracious and His mercy is everlasting.' When they came to the gate Myra said to the angel, 'Please don't shut the gate, for I am coming back again.' He answered, 'The gate will be kept open as long as the King's mercy lasts!' Myra replied, 'Why! then it will *never* be shut, for His mercy endureth for ever!'"

. . . . . .

"I wish she could have gone back to the earth instead, don't you, Frank?" said Bessie, "she would have been so pleased if she could have filled up the rest of the book with letters of gold. But no one can come back after they have died."

"But she wasn't really dead," said Frank, "she was only *dreaming*. I expect she dreamed that the King sent her back to turn over a new leaf."

. . . . . .

"Then the dream changed, and although Myra could not tell how it came to pass, she found herself again in the presence of the King. He was

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talking to her, and saying, 'You are to return to your own happy home, and be the same happy little girl, only you must be more earnest. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' And when I send for you again, I hope I shall not be disappointed by finding an empty book, when I expect to see your good actions written down in letters of gold.'

"Then the King gave her a pretty book, like Katie's, made of tablets of silver. He turned over the leaves until He came to the page where she was to begin afresh. And when He saw how sorry she was to see so many of the leaves wasted, how grieved she looked because there were no letters of gold to make Him rejoice!—because He loved her so, He took the book and did what the recording angel could not do—filled up all the empty pages. When He gave it back to her she saw written down in letters of gold quite from the beginning such words as these:—

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"'Jesus was gentle, meek, and lowly.'
'Jesus was kind, loving and patient.'
'Jesus was good, obedient and unselfish.'
'Jesus was always trying to make people happy.'
'Jesus went willingly wherever He was asked to go.'

And so the pages were filled up.

"When Myra had read it, the King told her that when He sent for her again, and He read in her book all that writing about Himself, He would count it for her goodness; 'only,' He said gravely, 'you must not be careless, for it will be a sad day for you if I am obliged to blot out my writing, because I find that you do not care to please me by trying to have the rest of the book filled up with beautiful writing of your own.'

"Then the King blessed her guardian angel, and commanded him to take Myra back again to her home; and although he had to leave all the glory and joy, yet he rejoiced to do this work for the King.

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"So they left the brightness and warmth, and went out again among the stars and into the cold, dark night, and soon they heard the noises of earth—knock, knock; thump, thump; *crash!* and she opened her eyes and found herself in her own room, and lying upon her own little bed."

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CHAPTER VII

"'WHAT a noisy world!' she murmured.

"'What a noisy father!' said a great strong voice, not in the least like an angel's. 'I have dropped the nail box, and awakened you from your sleep. But, look! dear, I have been nailing up this motto, that you might see it the first thing in the morning.'

"Myra read, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' 'The very words that Jesus said, father, when he sent me back to try for the prize.'

"'What are you talking about, dear? You have been dreaming.'

"No, father, Katie and I went to Heaven, and

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Katie is left behind because she had won the crown.'

"Her father pointed to Katie's bed, and Myra saw her sitting up, rubbing her eyes, and looking very sleepy.

"'Are you come back, too, Katie?'

"'I haven't been anywhere,' said Katie, fretfully, 'only there is so much noise I cannot sleep.'

"Then her mother said, 'You have been dreaming, Myra, tell us all about it.'

"When she had finished her father said, 'So I had a book, too, was it one of the pretty ones made of tablets of silver?'

"'I don't know, father. I could not tell until the recording angel took them up from the table.'

"Her mother said, 'It was a beautiful dream, and we must ask Jesus to teach us to do the things that are pleasing to Him, that we may all gain the prize, and live together in the mansion that He has prepared for us in the Holy City.'

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"ARE YOU COME BACK, TOO, KATIE?"

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"And now I am come to the end of my story, and I daresay you think that Myra was a perfectly good girl ever after. But that is not the case. No one is *perfectly* good in this world; but she left off talking of what she was going to do *to-morrow*. Every morning when she got up she looked at her motto, and said, 'That is what I have to do *to-day*.' So she went on doing the best that she could, a day at a time, and she very soon lost the character of being an idle, careless little girl."

. . . . . .

Bertie jumped down quickly from his chair, saying, "I think I will go to Heaven after all, and I am going to get my whistle and practise that new song, and then I shall know it by the time the King of Glory sends for me."

"You must go upstairs if you are going to play your whistle," said his mother, "I can't have that noise here."

"But it won't be a *noise*. I am sure I can play it

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very well; I am afraid you are not musical, mother. But never mind, I can play to the angels, for they are always with us, only our eyes are not strong enough to see them, although I believe *my* eyes would be strong enough if I liked to open them very very wide."

"Wasn't it strange, mother," said Bessie, "all the time Auntie was telling the story I thought I was Myra."

"And I found myself wondering when *my* careless little girl would turn over a new leaf."

"I mean to take Myra's motto, and do so at once, mother. But was it not kind of Jesus not to say a word about the ugly writing that He had blotted out with His blood."

Whilst Bessie was talking to her mother, and Bertie was playing to the angels, Frank sat still with a far-away look in his eyes, and did not speak. But when he knelt down to say his prayers, he stammered forth:

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" Gentle Jesus ! I want to be one of Thy messengers. If there is any black writing in my book, wash it out with Thy blood; and please fill up the empty leaves with beautiful writing, as Thou didst for Myra; because I want to win the prize, and go about with Thee wheresoever Thou goest. Amen."

Auntie said, "Poor little lambs! It is not His will that one of them should perish; surely their names are written in God's Book of Life."

THE END.

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